THE CROSS *over* RHINE *and* RUHR

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THE CROSS ON RHINE AND RUHR

A REPORT IN THE NAME OF
JESUS CHRIST

RELIEF WORK OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES
IN GERMANY - MAIN OFFICE RHINELAND

Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.
And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury to him.
The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word.

Isaiah XXIV.

Dear unknown reader!

Our modest booklet comes to you with a demand and a request. Only if both, demand and request are understood by you, from our illustrations and the accompanying words, will our booklet have a chance of staying with you beyond the moment of your perusing its contents.

This is what we are hoping for!

Not knowing each other, something very different might happen. Our words might annoy you, speaking of naked human distress. Our pictures, showing as they do, a reality that ought not to be, might look suspicious to you.

But this annoyance and this suspicion may possibly be necessary, so that the self-announced demand arises great and serious. Also distress and terror, destruction and chaos contain a message for us. They talk of the guilt, of the great guilt, which we human beings have brought on ourselves and with which we are now charging one another. They talk of the life destroying force of human arrogance and of destroyed limits of humanity. They point to things hidden from us, above us and around us, whence the will of judgment breaks forth, demanding:

"I am the LORD thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me!"

Thus the silent preaching of misery becomes intelligible in God's living word, and the means of our salvation. Of the sufferer as well as of the Samaritan.

This is what we are hoping for!

And a request is contained in our booklet, which we will put into writing. Our illustrations and our words are not fiction. They are reality. Therefore we ask you to look at them, not past them.

We also beg that you will not become cross with us or pity us. Behind our words and our illustrations lurks mad desperation and gray emptiness, lest the Cross be able to triumph over them. We ask you to look at this sign of victory together with us and to thank that love which says:

> "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

Demand and request of our booklet are trying to reach you, dear unknown reader, the human being in search of knowledge about his fellow human beings, to reach you the Christian, to whom his fellow Christians are brothers and sisters.

This is what we are hoping for!

We know the Rhine as Germany's great river, its banks lined with hills and castles and sunny valleys, whose fertile beauty is blessed with the gift of the wine. We remember it resounding from the rythm of busy work. We remember the lofty architecture of Cologne's Cathedral, built in centuries by many German generations. Remembering this and seeing it now overshadowed by suffering

and misery, we realise how terribly — even if not without own guilt — this blessed country has been chastised. Rubble heaps the dominant feature of its cities, shell blasted trees blots on its beautiful landscape.

Once, not so long ago, God's gospel was preached also at PAULS CHURCH at DUISBURG-HOCHFELD to a praying and

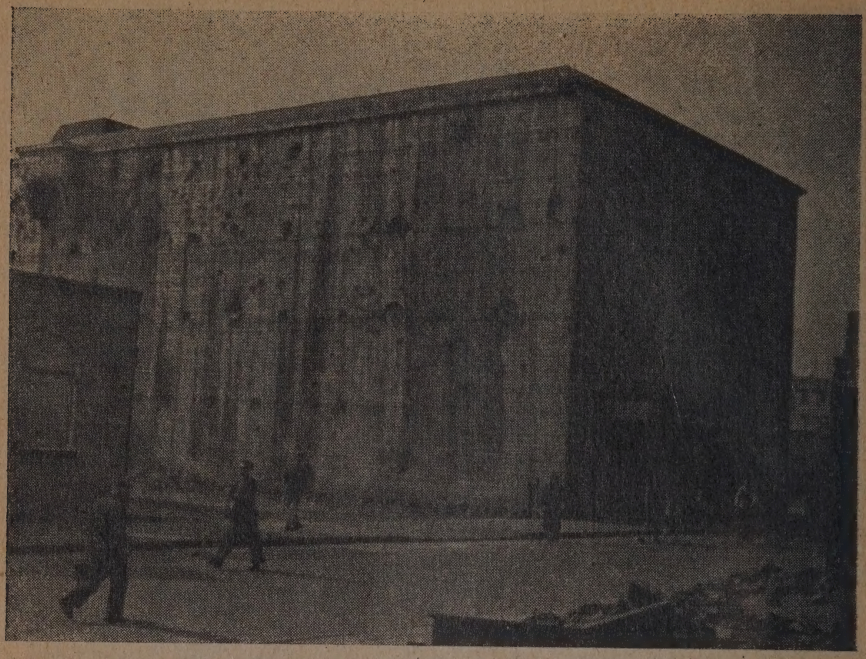
singing congregation, bells pealing, the organ praising God. Now it is one of the many destroyed Rhenish Churches: out of 31 protestant Churches at ESSEN 15 were totally destroyed, 11 seriously damaged. Looking down from the remaining spires means looking at rubble heaps like these: this is a view of Cologne's inner city seen from the Cathedral's spire.

The war damage assessment office at ESSEN has to deal with 450 000 cases totalling 4 000 000 000 Marks for this one city. Out of 184 000 lodgings 80 000 were totally destroyed, a further 80 000 were more or less seriously damaged and only 24 000 escaped without serious injury.

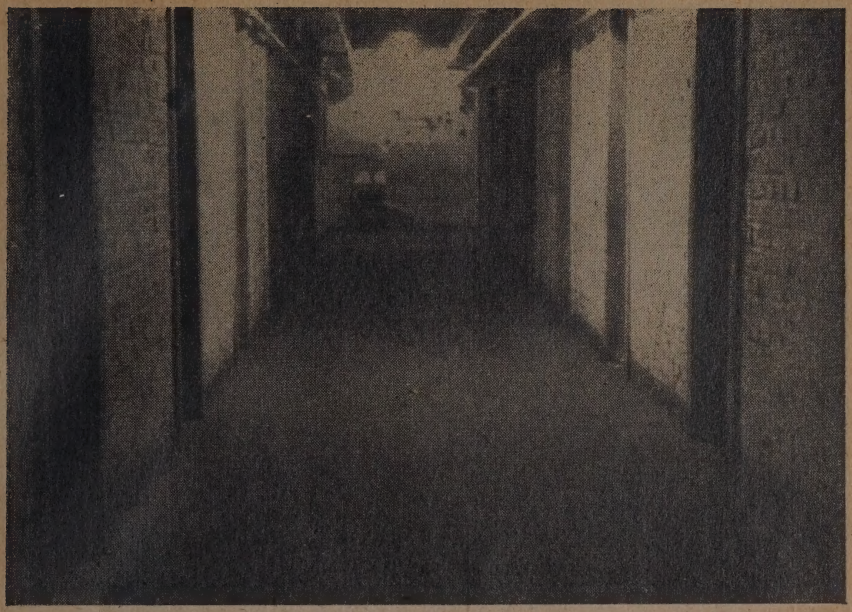
Every single telefone connection was ruined, only 8% of the Tram cars were left at the end of the war. Above is the view from the protestant Kindergarten at AACHEN, Alfonsstrasse 22, one of the three houses left out of the 40 buildings of this street. And building materials are so very scarce just now, so that reconstruction

progresses but very slowly. These people will have to wait a whole year before they get the glass needed for the repair of the most indispensable windows. Life amongst the ruins is very trying in the long run. What do these youngsters know about sunshine and joy? Their young lives bear the marks of childish sorrow and privation.

These two however, come regularly to our Kindergarten at AACHEN, where playing and singing they can just be children. In their narrow homes there is no room for this. Mothers are glad to know their children well cared for. The living space per head of the population averages now only 4,5 square meters as against 13,8 before the war. In spite of the severe restrictions issued in this district to keep newcomers away, 544000 people are already living again amongst the ruins of ESSEN (pre war population 666000), at DUISBURG the figures are 364000 or 83% of the former population, at OBERHAUSEN 178000 (against formerly 93%), at MUELHEIM (RUHR) 134000 (98%). In October 1947 there was a waiting list of 33000 people at ESSEN looking for lodgings. A Swedish friend told me, that of all the peculiarities of present day life in Germany none had struck him as so extraordinary as seeing the mass of human beings in the Ruhrdistrict busily running about during the day like ants in an ant heap and to see the same rubbles streets ghostlike and empty at night. Where had the hundreds of thousands found shelter? They had disappeared in the dugouts, in the cellars, in emergency quarters, barracks, gardenhuts...



In future times people will stand aghast in front of these caves and holes, horror struck by the thought that once human beings, like themselves had to live there. This is the "Bunker" (air raid shelter) at OBERHAUSEN, Helmholtzstrasse. During the war it served as shelter for the population during air raids. Walls several yards thick, no windows... The bad air conditions make a longer stay at this "Bunker" unhealthy. 1162 times the population of ESSEN was sent into this Bunker during the war on account of air raids. Now several families are obliged to share these bare rooms. They take turns at cooking on a kitchen stove. Three cots had to be placed one above the other in the sleeping room. How nerve racking for the women to have to live continually in artificial light amongst their miserable belongings, between these unlovely walls — the old ones sitting in their chairs staring at the gray walls. — Never a ray of sunshine for them, symbolic for the sunnless atmosphere. 40 000 people were living at Düsseldorf alone in air raid shelters and cellars in August 1947. Cave dwellers — below the normal level — they are already now living in the realm of the dead.



14 families with 35 children live on this floor in one of BONNS air raid shelters. Like in a vault. It calls to mind a word by Dr. John Mott spoken in June 1947 at a meeting of young protestant men at Cologne, before 12000 boys: "recently an American Bishop told me about his journey through the present day Germany. To my question regarding his general impression he replied just these few ominous words: "graves and crosses!"
Bear this in mind when looking at these pictures: these people are not human outcasts, such as have always existed and will unfortunately always exist in the slums. This is a whole people in distress facing you. These are not individual cases of cruel hardship but each picture represents a reality existing thousandfold.
If these stones and these walls could talk to us of how many secret tears, how many careworn nights would they tell...

7 people live in this room at Cologne-Bickendorf. They sleep on what remains of a "couch" and on the old rags near the stove. Our representative at OBERHAUSEN told us in June 1947 of a woman who has installed herself with her infant at arms in a wash-house, where it is always damp — the woman was suffering from rheumatic fever. Other lodgings at OBERHAUSEN consist of two primitive rooms exposed to rain, the staircase leading up to it has no railing, one of the four children is sick with tuberculosis, a fifth child is on the way.

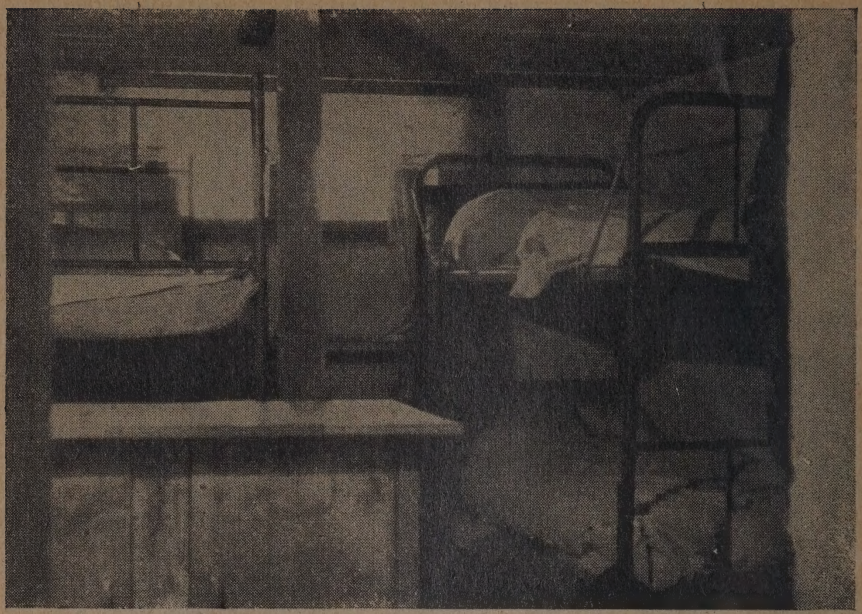
The district nurse from WUPPERTAL-Sonnborn writes: "the Hergert family has 10 children. They live in a miserable kitchen, two further rooms are used as sleeping rooms. There are only just bedsteads and thin blankets... nothing to eat, nothing to wear, they lost everything..."

In this way cruel hardship and misery crowd these people. They feel it like a ring of steel, from which they desperately try to free themselves. We want to help in this liberation by our relief work in a battle of love, in a battle of faith. We have in mind not only the material help which we are able to pass along thanks to the

co-operation of our friends abroad. Our very existence as Relief Work, our Care activity as such restore strength and faith to the disillusioned desperate people on Rhine and Ruhr, giving them a new interest in life. We will not admit that our friends, our fellow beings stay paralysed and embittered. We shall never tire of sending our message of faith into air raid shelters and hunger quarters: "God who has helped so often when distress threatened to overwhelm us will not forsake us now".

Our picture shows 10 people living in one room: there is practically no furniture besides the bedstead, there are not even chairs enough for everybody. When we are taking snap shots of the old and the young their features relax a little when we tell them this picture will go to our friends abroad, to those kind friends who have often helped us.

There is a letter in front of us from a district nurse from ESSEN-West: "at my visit to the displaced families G. K. and B. I. received such a shock that I needed some time to explain the purpose of my visit to these people. The room in which these 6 grown up

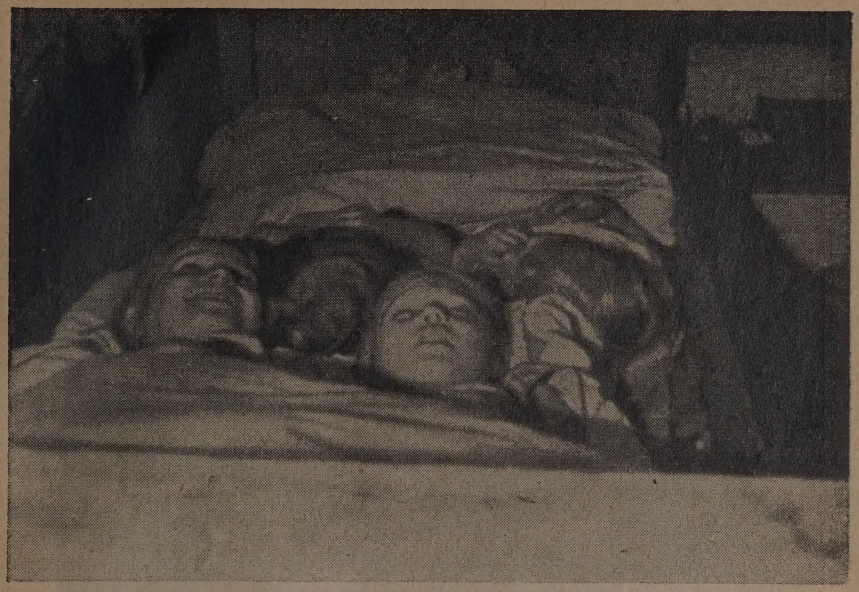


persons live with one child is 3 by 6 meters. They happened to be all at home at the time and were taking turns eating, three at a time, at the small table. Some had to stand close to the wall to make standing room for me. A bed and a cot that is all, who cannot secure a place there sleeps on the floor. I have done everything to help but it is so terribly slow, these people suffer no end..."

Into this neighborhood, to ESSEN-West our above picture leads us: the K. family with their nine children live there in two rooms in a cellar. All eleven people sleep in this narrow room in four beds. As can be seen on the picture the four little ones sleep in in the lowest bed. The little urchins grin because they have never been photographed in bed before.

To help these little waifs in their distress is truly service in the name of Christ.

In June 1947 the Parson of the congregation at Kamp-Lintfort in the district of MOERS (Niederrhein) wrote to us: "A disabled soldier who lost both legs is living right opposite me. A few weeks ago I had the pleasant duty of taking half of a CARE-PARCEL to



him and his family. It is touching to observe now how one of the children, a little girl, remembering the precious gift I brought, keeps running after me wherever she sees me, shaking hands and smilingly asking: "uncle, when are you bringing another parcel?" The family had been completely out of touch with the congregation in consequence of all its need and sorrow".

How much is gained already if we human beings meet each other with open hearts and open minds. How much more could be gained however, if we would but meet all human misery as human beings mindful of the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!

This one room at COLOGNE-BICKENDORF has to do duty as shelter and living room for 10 people. — At Düsseldorf during the summer 1947 a census was taken for statistical purposes of 574 youths from all parts of the city and from all sections of the

population: 30% were still living in damaged rooms, 42% had no beds to themselves, 50% had only one dress or one suit of clothes to wear, 64% had only one pair of shoes, 23% no change of laundry, 85% could never eat a satisfying meal. This is the everyday wretchedness, the fate of these people, of which these leaves can only try to give you a faint idea.

The above picture takes us back to AACHEN, right into the center of the town: this boy has had to sleep on this "lair" for more than two years. What hardships have these people already gone through: In September 1944 154000 out of the 160000 inhabitants were forcibly evacuated, 6000 succeeding in hiding themselves and surviving, in the cellars, the artillery shell fire. In October 1944 AACHEN, "the first town of Germany" was taken by the American Army. 70% of the houses had already been totally destroyed by air raids previous to the artillery bombardment. The four protestant Churches no longer existed. Poor as beggars, amongst great difficulties the population returned from the East, from Thuringia and Hannover in spring 1945. About 120000 people returned, carrying bundles, all they had, to this "home", this rubble heap. Everything lost...

amongst the ruins, in damp cellars, in dug outs they found miserable shelter.

This shows what our shops and workrooms look like today. The picture was taken at ESSEN-WEST. Raw materials, machines and tools are lacking everywhere. In many trades production amounts to practically nothing. A report from DUISBURG will give you an idea of the amount of clothing available for distribution on allotment tickets. For the entire population of 357 570 of this big city the authorities had at their disposal: 74 winter coats, 93 working suits, 17 pairs of drawers, 521 shirts and 442 pairs of working shoes for 110 000 workers.

Look at this snap shot taken in front of a COLOGNE Lodgings office. Old and young, rich and poor, old and sick, all are trying for a permit to move into Cologne. While inside work is in progress they are crowding and pushing each other outside in the hope of getting somewhere. Everybody here knows these "queues", in front of the food shops, during the very hard winter last year especially in front of the bread shops or near the railway stations,

everyone of us had to join in the struggle, where everything is considered fair and all the rules of common decency are forgotten.
You may feel inclined to ask: is this not a gallery of horror pictures? This is a true picture of life in the raw on Rhine and Ruhr. The small things of normal human life, formerly taken for granted, are now precious rarities. Facing these facts nobody can claim discharge from reponsibility towards God. It is clearly everybody's reponsibility to act on behalf of this sinking population.
"Picture Post" recently wrote: "the best known Englishman in Germany today is VICTOR GOLLANCZ because he is now carrying on his campaign for the sending of food parcels into Germany,

having been deeply touched by what he saw. You can see him here, in front of the "lodgings" tinkered from box wood by a miner with a family of eight. This politician, editor and author went out of his way, looking round "darkest Germany", — as he called his book — before he founded the action "save Europe now" (SEN). Without distinction of race or religion he thus became the friend of the poor and oppressed, thus he grasped Germany's problem, which once made Heinrich Heine say:

"thinking of Germany's plight
gives me many a sleepless night".

Of those abroad, who from a sense of duty, strive to improve the German conditions we can only think in terms of deepest gratitude.

Thus we remember a sentence, spoken by the nearly eighty year old French poet ANDRE GIDE in July 1947 in front of the students of Mainz University: "your ruins are also our ruins".

Our thoughts go out to all those Christians in all countries, especially in USA, in Sweden and in Switzerland, who immediately after the ceasing of hostilities held out their helping hands to the Churches in Germany, and who have been helping us time and again to bear up against a very hard fate. We believe in all humility that God made these men and women, who keep on sending us "unknown and yet known" their greetings the messengers of His. Eternal Charity.

We rejoice in this friendship especially for the sake of our children. Little Jack has climbed a rubble heap in a street at ESSEN-ALTSTADT: "I am gathering a nosegay for mummy". Hardly more than miserable herbs, which the childish hand can pluck from the rubbish, the little heart however rejoices in the poor beauty amongst all this misery. This is the way, modest and at the same time dangerous, in which our children grow up, involving a great responsibility of helping them to become men fit to deal with the great tasks of life.

Their "brethren" at Cologne are no better off: on these playgrounds of the German city children need breeds ingenuity! Everywhere in the congregations our busy nurses are looking after the little ones.

In this street of ESSEN-WEST the nurse is offering the little man a sweet meat from the last gift from abroad. He accepts it but suspiciously: our children are no longer used to receive presents. One of these little boys, selected to be one of a childrens' transport to Switzerland, for his state of serious undernourishment, told his friend of the great wonders in prospect for him on this trip: "already on the way in the train each of us will have chocolate!" This he told all his friends and aunts. It was for him a symbol of all the wonderful things in store for him in that wonderful far away country. These seemingly harmless, unimportant snapshots of life disclose the standard of present day conditions. Old and young are learning again to be thankful for things that were once taken for granted:

"O dear God how precious is a healthy body,
able to eat, to drink and to sleep.
How little do we thank God for these!"

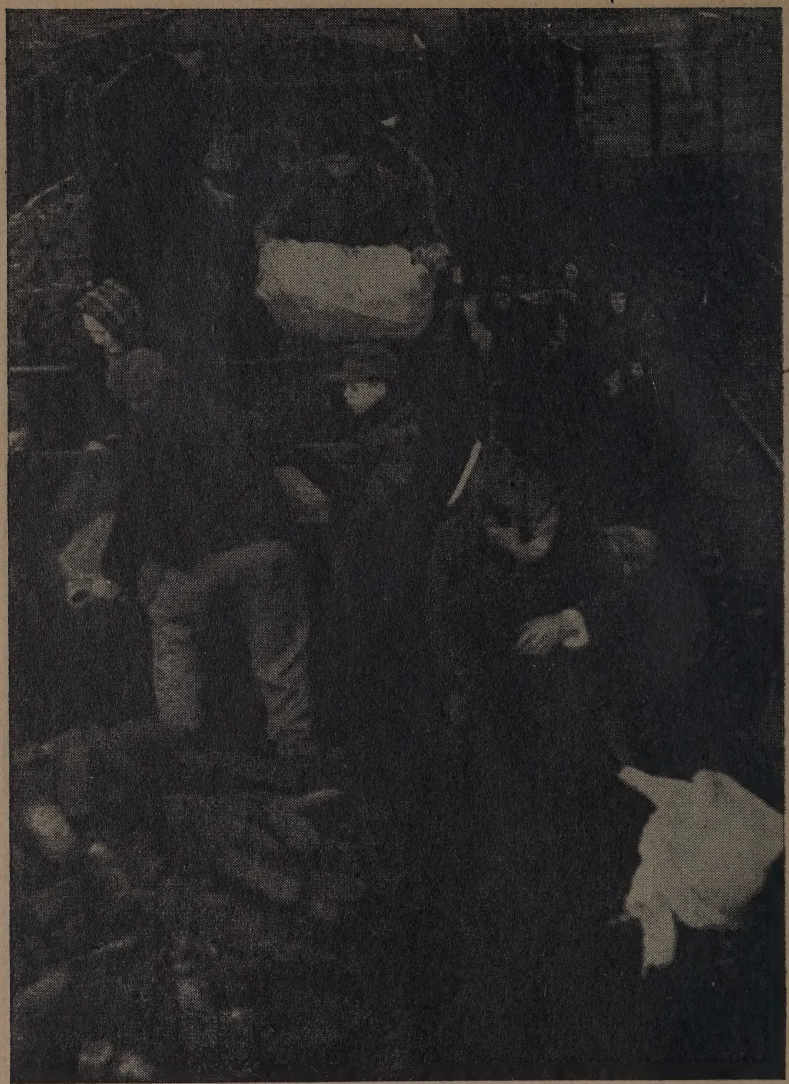
(Luther)

A Swiss report "The misery of the European children after the war" by Holger Hoffmann, Geneva 1946, estimates the number of children who have become distresssed through the war at 47 millions, 17% of these = 8 millions are in Germany. This means more than half of all German children. More than 2,5 millions of German children from the East have lost their homes and about 3 millions of German children are for always or for a long time without their fathers.

Here, at AACHEN the nurse plays with the children at the protestant Kindergarten, amongst the rubbles, however under God's sun, which shines even here.

In winter things are more difficult through lack of heatable rooms. At Dinslaken (Düsseldorf district) on a given day in February 1947 971 children were absent from school through sickness. On the same day 553 more children had to stay away from school on account of lack of sufficient clothing.

These children from the Riehl living barracks at Cologne Riehl have no more to wear than this picture shows. A girl in the fourth form of a peoples school wrote in her paper on the given theme "my most beautiful day": "my most beautiful day was February 17th 1947. On this day my brother Günther died and I was given his coat, his shoes and his knitted underjacket".



During the severe last winter bitter need at times drove people to desperation on Rhine and Ruhr. On the railway stations and at the mines the coal lorries were robbed by young and old — to get the coal needed for cooking the scanty meals. The official allotment

for each household for the whole winter amounted to 1cwt — in the center of the mining district! Need will lead to stealing and looting. Young and old break the law. Chaos threatens. How can we ward it off?

Martin Niemöller says: "Just as our fight for our faith was our duty during the past twelve years, so it will be our duty to do the work of love in the years to come. May we never tire in this work so that we shall be able to give a better account of our work than we can today".

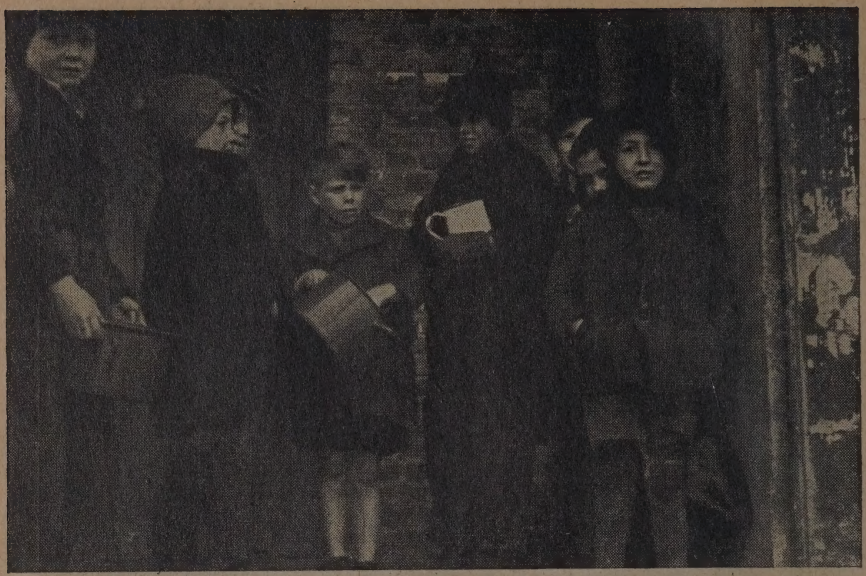
To relieve the distress amongst children, as it appeals to us from the above winter picture taken at Cologne, our Relief Work opened a CHILDREN'S HOME at HACKENBERG near Bergneustadt on the Agger valley dam. Here 60 city children, in an advanced state of undernourishment and in need of special care, will be carefully nursed for 6 weeks, the home being open throughout the year. Essen, Mülheim (Ruhr), Duisburg, München-Gladbach have made a start. A further Home is going to be opened at Königs-

winter. The foodstuffs earmarked for Children by our friends abroad have put us in a position to make a special drive regarding this work.

It sounds like promise of paradise: to know a place where one can eat to repletion and have a warm room. One is cold not only in the earth holes but also in the attics where this woman at Essen has emergency lodgings. She also — shamefacedly — obtains coal (illegally) from an Essen goods train. The picture near by shows the youngsters "fetching" coal from the railway tracks at Cologne-Bickendorf, Venloer Strasse. Youth gone wrong through need! In autumn 1947 it started again in the same way. Westdeutsche Rundschau reports from Essen on October 11th 1947: "A woman was hit by an engine, while collecting coal, on the tracks near mine "Zollverein".

On the other hand we saw a woman, her face radiating happiness carrying a parcel. She came from the customs office. Christian friends

in Sweden had sent her a friendly parcel. She told us "I am so glad for my three children at home, they know nothing yet ... I am so glad", and away she went. The light of love had been kindled in her, creating joy and thankfulness.



Do you see the double quartette over there? Instead of musical instruments they are using vessels and pots of assorted sizes. They are waiting at the entrance of a mine for the left over food of the miners, who get the highest rations and may possibly for this reason have something to spare for a hungry boy.

Mentioning additional food for children we turn a really hopeful page, written by the human love of our American and Swedish friends, deeply engraved in the hearts of those whom it behoves to return thanks!

At Solingen, Remscheid and Oberhausen our Relief Work has been able to start feeding small children, thanks to a special gift by friends abroad. At all the distribution centers, like in Remscheid for instance (page 34), this poster is displayed announcing the victory of the Cross of Jesus Christ safely carrying the disciples through the raging sea. It is the victory of love over distress, forgiveness for all guilt.

The eyes of the little ones including the smallest are shining just like those of this little girl at Oberhausen: she tells us "for more that two months we have now been getting this good soup which they send us from America. I have already put on 5 pounds!"

Let us give you one voice as that of many, the letter of thanks of a lady Doctor at Oberhausen, Dr. med. Ruth Martini who writes: "my boy partakes of the meals, which you give to the small children in Germany. I should like to thank you from my heart for this help. These meals have largely contributed towards my boy's coming

trhough the winter without serious damage to his health. The child enjoyed the tasty soups and as a mother I was relieved of a great anxiety by these substantial regular meals. Also as a Doctor I should like to thank you on behalf of many underfed children who were so badly in need of help."

You can see the child-feeding of our Relief Work at Solingen in progress. Helpers distribute the food and feed the three year olds, who are devoutly sitting each one in front of his dish.
Regarding the "school feedings" and the additional "Sweden meals" for our school children we take from the numerous reports received the letter of the Parson at Mülheim (Ruhr)-Styrum, of May 10th, 1947, reading as follows:
just now my little 12 years old pupil was here of the 5th form to whom I give lessons in religion. He came to fetch his "Sunday leaves" which he faithfully distributes with 20 of his comrades. Today he could not make up his mind to go. "Have you got anything on your mind? I asked him. "We have not had a midday meal for a fortnight he said, my mother wants me to ask you have you got anything for us?" The family consists of the mother and 6 children under 14 years. The father is still in Russia the family has lost everything through bombing. They live now in emergency quarters. Feeding and clothing the children is a daily problem almost beyond the woman's strength. I have been able to help from time to time

by allotments from the gifts received from the Relief Work. Then joy shows on the pale faces of the children and even the mother's careworn features clear up for a short while until the next day announces its burden. At easter the eldest boy was confirmed. On this occasion I had a white bread baked from 3 pounds of flour received in the Mennonite gift. This was taken to their home by

the district helper of "Protestant Women Help". Thus the day received some festive splendor after all for the always hungry little crowd. They were all surprised and thankful. If only the givers themselves could see the terrible distress and the joy created by their help!"

This is a class room of one of the popular schools at Essen. Last winter there was no fuel for heating. Whoever amongst the children is in possession on of an overcoat or a cap wears it during lessons. In 1945 there were 65 000 pupils for the popular schools at Essen, they are educated at 63 schools, the majority of which is housed in scantily patched up buildings. Before the war Essen had 181 popular schools. In October 1947 554 of the classes had no separate rooms and for 20 000 children only 1500 slates were available. The schooling is carried through in two shifts. It is no unusual occurrence that one child wears the only pair of shoes of the family when going to school in the morning and the little sister wears the same pair in the afternoon. Especially at Cologne you may see school children going to school, carrying a brick which they picked up somewhere out of the rubbles. It will have to serve for the rebuilding of their school. The picture opposite was taken at Essen,

Bamlerstrasse. It is July 1947, the boy is about to go to school, he has to close his eyes, coming from his dark cellar lodgings the brillant daylight hurts him.

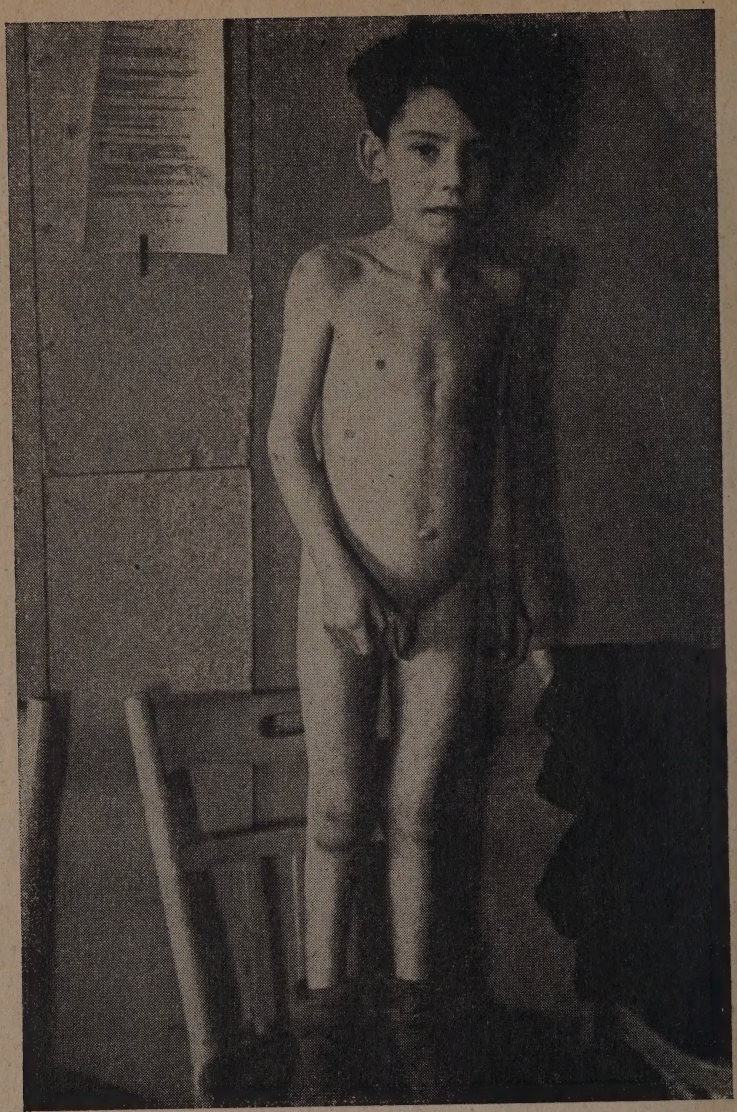
You would be surprised to see school children collecting used tickets at the tramway stops. For handing in 100 used tickets as waste paper they obtain the right to buy a copy book. Because shops sell copy books only for a certain quantity of waste paper, town officials at Wuppertal recently had to complain of the school childrens' tearing off the posters from the sign boards.

Victor Gollancz writes in the "New Statesman and Nation" about impressions received while travelling in Germany: "these people have worn out or used up their last personal and household belongings, supplies are hopelessly insufficient. I saw awful footgear on 50% of the children at Düsseldorf schools — shoes with yawning holes, things made from dirty rags, older boys hobbling painfully about in the shoes of smaller boys." We took a snapshot of the footgear of such Düsseldorf school children from a passing group, on one of them you will notice the school satchel and his kit for the school meal.

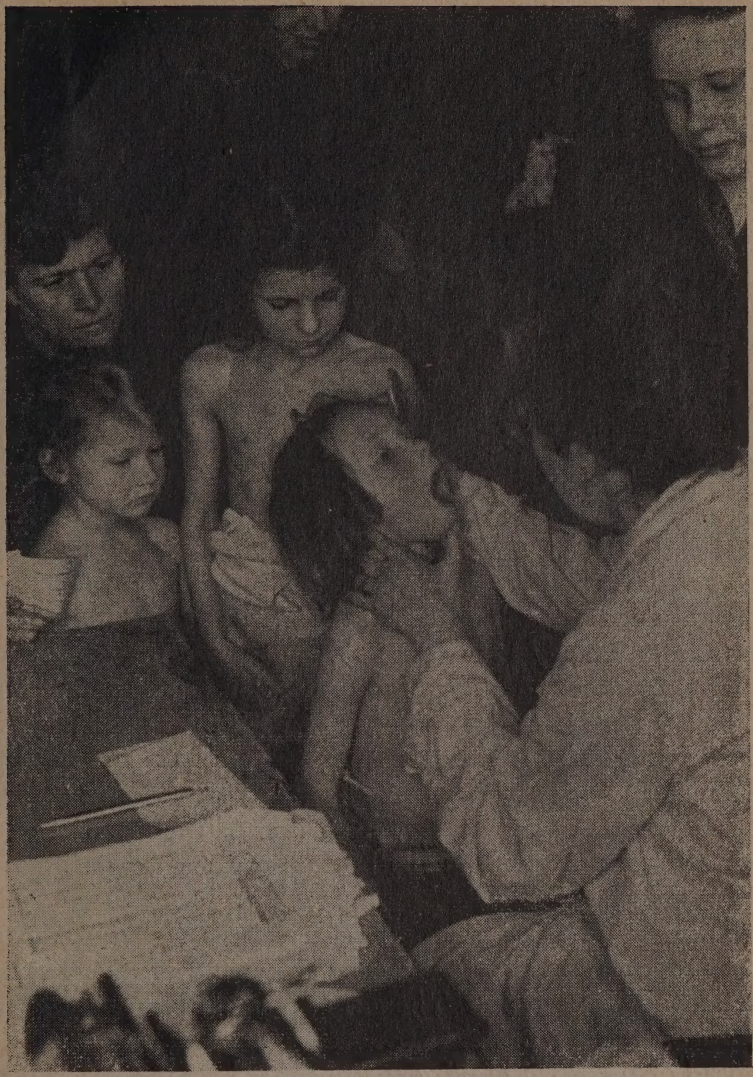
Three big cases with shoes from Sweden have just arrived at Aachen: the parish nurse is starting the distribution, dealing with the most urgent cases. Each pair of shoes means safety from sickness, colds or possibly pneumonia, which would prove disastrous in view of the bad state of nutrition. Even repairs are either impossible or exceedingly difficult through lack of materials or over-

work of the cobblers. In most cases shoes are so badly worn out as to make repair impossible.
Little Konrad in Bonn however rejoices: "look what I have got"! Mother is less anxious about the coming winter since her darling has such a fine pair of shoes from America.

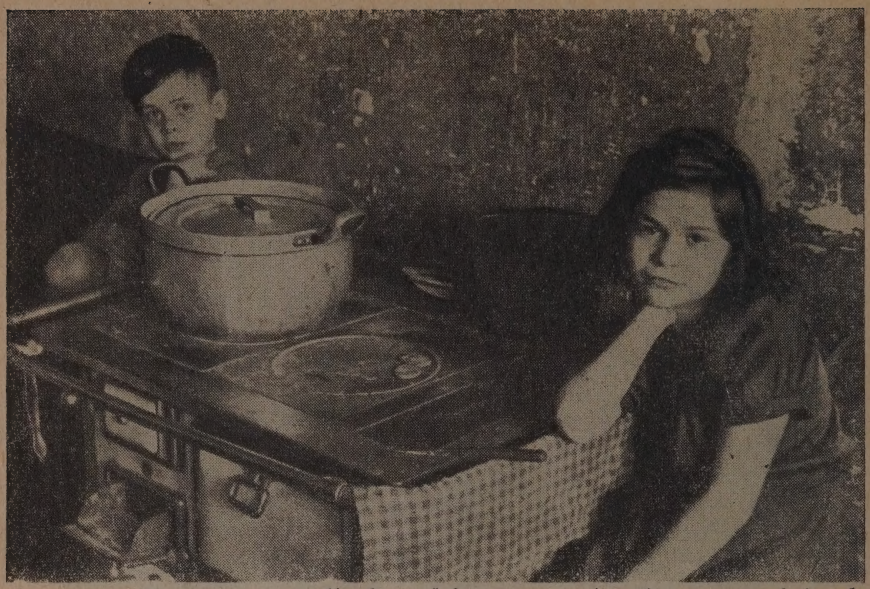
For thousands of German children however the outlook is juts as distressing and doubtful as for this 6 months old baby from Oberhausen, now at the protestant children's hospital for its bad state of undernourishment. These children, part of a whole army of hungry children look out for those who will have pity on them! Ernest is about to be examined. Together with other especialyl



needy children from Cologne he will profit from the invitation to Switzerland where the mountains are so high and the air so pure and clear, where milk is aplenty and the bread is even buttered everyday . . . oh! how beautiful that sounds! Therefore also this mother looks confidently to the future: her little girl, who is just being examined by the lady doctor will receive help. Little Ernest



whispered into our ear: already on the journey in the train there will be chocolade. He has only tasted it once in his life so far...!
We cannot help calling to mind a word spoken by that great Suiss gentleman PESTALOZZI: "God is near where human beings show love to one another".
Famine gets her victims, year after year. During the winter 1946-47



doctors at Essen repeatedly found freezing to be the cause of death continuous undernourishment is frequently the real cause.

At Essen in January 1945 (after 5 years of war!) doctors issued 6689 certificates for additional food rations, in October 1947 however, 80000 were issued! This means that today 80000 people are in such a poor state of nutrition that doctors have to take steps. To these 20000 sick people have to be added who receive the extra rations for the sick. How many have learned the meaning of the prayer and are praying from the bottom of their hearts: "give us this day our daily bread".

These are two of 11 brothers and sisters. This family of thirteen live at Cologne in two rooms. The showpiece of their furniture is the stove with two pots. The girl is toasting two slices of raw potatoes on the stove.

The head of the town health department at REMSCHEID, Medizinalrat Dr. Rupprecht has sent us a twelve page memorandum on the state of nutrition in his district. According to this statement the deficiency of albumin in the nourishment of the youths (not counting the special childrens' feedings and the school feedings) is officially given as 73,2%. The share of fat in the already insufficient total of calories has dropped from 28% in 1939 to 3% (three

percent!) at the moment, but even this small percentage is going to be cut once more according to the latest announcements for October 1947.

The old people are to be pitied. In Germany they never have been able to enjoy a quiet time since 1914.

This old woman has gathered some wood from the rubbles to keep

the cold away. 80 year old granny is living in a former workshop at Essen. Just now she is talking things over with the parish nurse. The only subject she wants to talk about is her son. For the last two years she has been hoping for his return from Russia, where he is a POW. She gets very anxious when she sees the homecoming of those who are released from the East, almost all of them are sick. 80% of those who report to us show serious famine edema. For this reason our Relief Work, in close co-operation with YMCA, has created a "Home for returned soldiers" in the beautiful surroundings of Leuscheid-Sieg and at Duisburg for those who, on returning find themselves without a home, stranded on the streets. Here the returned men will be taken care of and nursed for 4 to 6 weeks, when a suitable job will be found for them. "My big boy however, she says, will have no need to go to one of these homes, when he returns, even if I have practically nothing left, I will take good care of him..."

Here and on the next page we show pictures of Feeding the old at Düsseldorf. We want to save them from the terrible scourge now again raging: Tuberculosis. The medical adviser of the Social Ministry at Düsseldorf reports: pace and number of Tbc. cases show this disease in a form so far unknown".
Professor Dr. Martini of Bonn University writes: "the course taken by the present Tbc. sickness is in most cases exceedingly malicious. Undernourishment puts all other causes into the shade."
A doctor at Essen says: "the real and at the same time the worst consequences of the present undernourishment will be seen only later on. What we see now every day is the general decline of strength to absolute weakness, or famine edema, loss of weight in a degree formerly thought impossible, a terrifying number of miscarriages and diseases of the stomach and the bowels in a degree hitherto unknown. What will come in a few years will be much more serious.

The consequences will be felt from about 1950 on. Already today many can hardly keep their balance, they stagger and can hardly keep still during a medical examination. The other day a woman came to my dispensary. She was 1,60 m tall and weighed but 66 pounds. The saddest part is that people who have been sick are unable to recuperate."

The "Union of protestant Hospitals of Rhineland and Westfalia" wrote in September 1947: "the necessary extension of Hospital treatment due to malnutrition rose already in 1946 by 20% in comparison to 1945. Through lack of the proper diet foodstuffs only an insufficient diet can be given at the Hospitals."

At Cologne-Deutz the Relief Work offered a special treat to the oldest and the sickest members of the congregation at Easter 1947, using the flour and the coffee presented by friends abroad to send cakes and real coffee to their homes.

A steady stream of new fugitives is flowing into the West from the East: nearly 14 millions of Germans have lost their homes through the war. On July 31st 1947 the number of refugees from Eastern territories amounted to 347753 in our district (North Rhine Province).

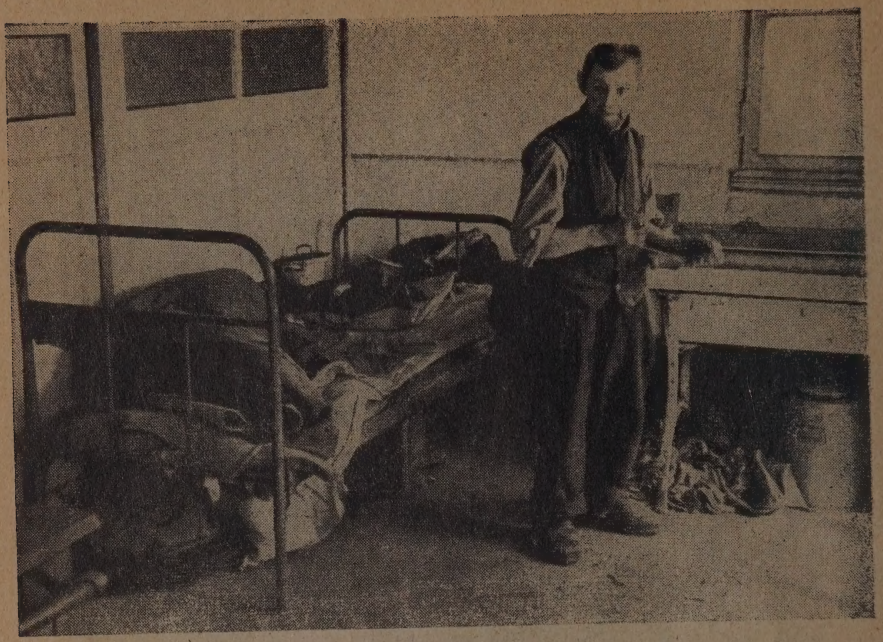
Here we see the Beyersdorf family, gardeners from the Sudetenland, making a short stop at Cologne with the last remnant of their belongings ... people without a home, only a few of the millions, human beings haunted by the questions Why? Where to? How long? At home in Silesia, Pommerania, East and West Prussia they were forced to leave the great farms of their ancestors behind them, the family

heritage of centuries, unable to take more with them than what they were able to carry in their hands and on their backs. A few miserable belongings in a bundle, in a knapsack. Here in the West they are strangers, amongst the rubbles... facing nothing! What hard individual fates! At much destroyed Essen we now have 12645 of them! The Church district of München-Gladbach, a diaspora with 92000 protestant souls has received 55000 refugees from the East, mostly protestants.

The faces of all these refugees show the marks of these sorrowful times. However side by side with embitterment, desperation and fatalism we find traits of genuine piety. One of them wrote: "as dearest legacy of our homes we carry in our hearts the stout church-mindedness of the East Prussian, the glad animation of Pommerania, the sincere piety of Silesia."

Our picture shows the refugees Camp at Angermund (Düsseldorf district) with a public dancing hall, now for more than 2 years the living quarters of 12 families of East-refugees. 15 beds, 3 tables

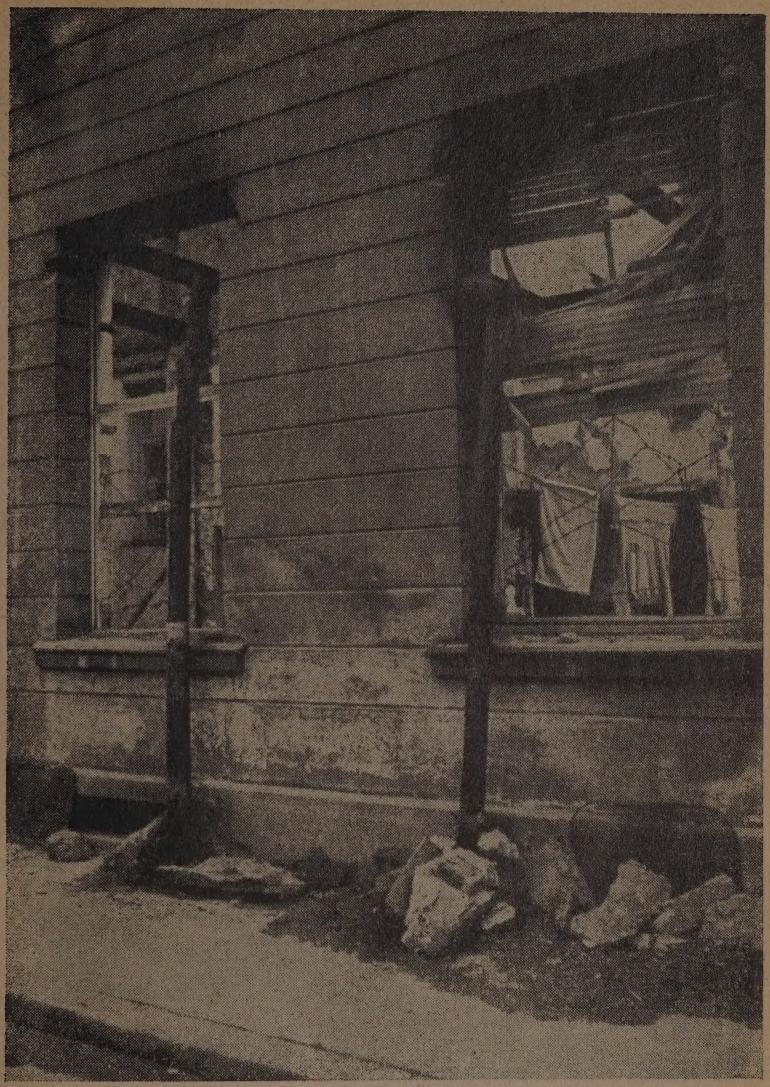
and a chest of drawers are the only furniture. And these here are just being received ad Refugees Camp Wesseling (Cologne district). In all her misery the mother is glad to have her children with her. Just now our Relief Work shows in its "Search Service"



eight series of pictures with many dozens of photos of children from the East who are trying to find their parents, from whom they were seperated during the flight. Surely many of these have lost their parents for ever and these are only a small section of a much greater number. How many refugees come and go, looking all over the country trying to find their children...

Here also our first aid is equally given to all those in distress, without distinction of religion, race or politics. Besides the LAND CHURCHES eight Free Churches are in close Co-operation with our Relief Work, amongst them the Episcopal Methodist Church, the Union of the German Mennonite Congregations, the Protestant-Lutheran Freechurch and the Ancient Catholic Church. The refuges' plight calls for the Charity of the Samaritan. It is not a question of: have these Germans deserved their fate? and should they perish? but: how would Christ have done?

The world wide will to extend Christian brotherly help is testified in the German edition of the August 1947 number of "Informations by the German African Relief Comittee", Pretoria and



Capetown. In showing a picture "this is how East refugees live" they appeal to the African Public's understanding of our situation. The man on the picture near by was the owner of a flourishing village smithy near Königsberg. His wife and 2 children were slain

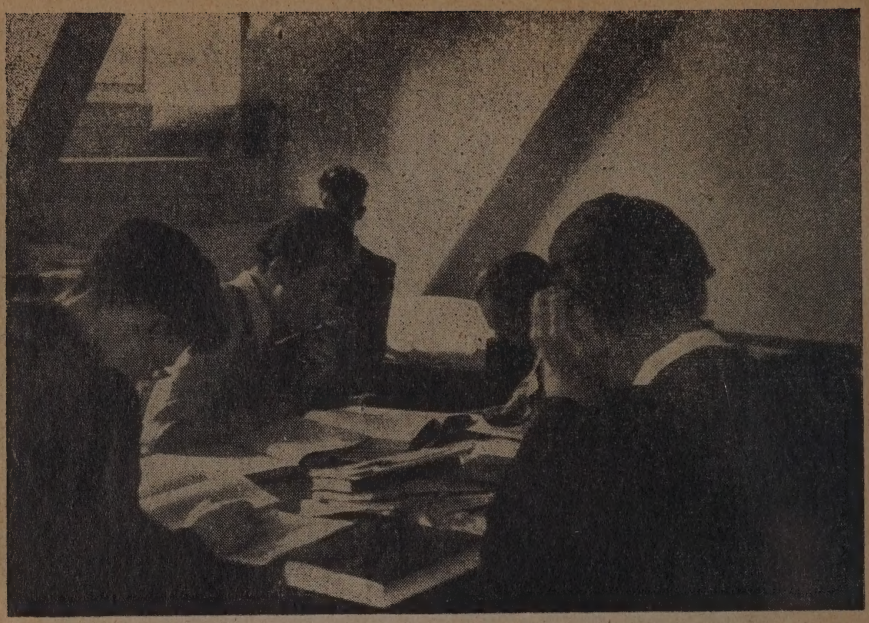
by the Russians. He does not care any more what he or his room are looking like. Apathy and tiredness of life are the great dangers for the East refugees!

This eigtheen years old boy, drafted for military service at the end of the war, had to go through a year and a half of hard labour in a

quarry in Siberia as a POW. Today he is a sick man, who ought to be in a Hospital — but Hospitals are overcrowded. With his mother and 5 brothers he lives in one room at Cologne with hardly any furniture at all. (Picture 53 shows once more what formerly good rooms at Cologne are looking like today.)

On the faces of the war-disabled the marks of sorrow are deeply engraved. From the battle fields of all the fronts they now come to the rubble heaps of our cities as cripples, for whom nobody cares who are not wanted anywhere. These here are standing in front of Düsseldorf's Main station. During the last year they drew only 40 Marks as a monthly pension. Some of them are dreading the return of a comrade from the POW. Camp, because they will have to return the clothes lent to them.

Our Relief Work has caused announcement to be made from the pulpits of cases where the father or the son of a family has safely returned from the war pointing out that such a family could not better show Christian charity than by adopting reponsibility for one of the disabled men. For the re-education of the disabled our Relief Work has made a collection of tools from the factories in the district. The re-education schools are mostly situated in South Germany,



in the less destroyed areas. There those disabled who are unable to return to their former professions can, with the help of the material so collected be re-educated for some new trade. Others, selected by the physicians, will be sent to the Relief Work Homes in South Germany to recuperate. During the last summer disabled men from Essen, Duisburg and Remscheid went to Bad Kissingen, to Stift Oberstenfeld-Württemberg and to the Chiemsee to regain health of body and mind. During the autumn re-education pupils went from Duisburg and Mülheim (Ruhr) to Rothenburg o.T. Some of the younger home comers are plucky enough to start a University career, others continue the studies interrupted by the war. Once our Rhenish Universities were famous for their colourful life and their traditional students corps. Many of our friends abroad have formerly been studying at Bonn. "We get along alright even if it is very crowded" say the seven students of Theology who live in this attic at Bonn. "Only during the winter it was awfully cold. How good that we were able to get good food at our "Mensa" thanks to the "Irish gift"." Not a few of them have to go hungry most of the time, because they really have not got

the money to go to a University. The other day we were talking to a fellow at Bonn, who could spend no more than 50 Pfennig for a meal. To understand what that means one must look at today's prices...!

We are much indebted to the ecumenal movement for their valuable gift of books. Not only that many books, cherished private treasures were lost, burnt or stolen, but also the great libraries report irreparable losses. Bonn's University Library lost "only" 25% of its books, the Essen Town Library however 95%!

In spite of rubbles and distress the work of clearing up progresses! Self-help is the beginning of all relief work. As yet nobody can foresee the end of the distress on Rhine and Ruhr. Completely destroyed Wesel however made a collection on behalf of the "Gustav Adolf Work" for distressed Diaspora congregations, to the amount of more than 7000 Marks and this in the face of 2,13 Millions of Marks damage on the own Church property. You can see the inhabitants busy clearing up, in the back ground you notice the Willibrord Church.

Mülheim (Ruhr) just reported that a collection taken at Divine

service on thanksgiving day 1947 for our Relief Work produced four times as much as formerly.

A notice about our home for the returned soldiers at Duisburg which appeared in our Church paper "The Way" produced numerous useful offerings in kind, including many a "widows mite", besides more than 5000 Marks in cash. A protestant school of the Mülheim-Altstadt congregation handed us 500 Marks, as the net result of a Parents' night, for refugee relief.

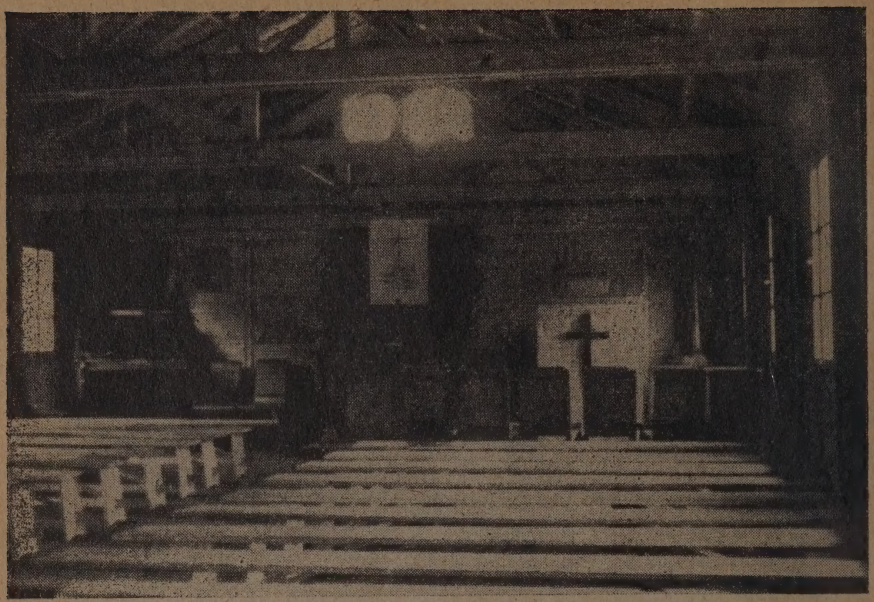
Above you see Essen boys, busily at work hewing bricks, so that they may be used again. While Essen's Chief Mayor had to announce publicly at Easter 1947 that the food situation was about to collapse completely and while rations were cut down to 741 calories daily the protestant congregations of Essen replied to an appeal of our Relief Work on behalf of the homecomers from the East by sending thousands of small parcels as a first greeting and help. It was like a tremenduous AMEN to St. John's words: "For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen." The Altstadt Congregation of Essen can show a special monument of sacrificing brotherly love:

the Hut-Church a gift of the Relief Work of the Protestant Churches in Switzerland to replace the ruined "Kreuzeskirche". On the next page you can see an interior view of this Church. Unfortunately only 7 undamaged Churches out of the former 31 protestant Churches at Essen are fit for Divine service. This Swiss Offering of a Church testifies to the solidarity of the Christian Churches throughout the world, whose appeal is not directed to charity alone, but also to the Christian Union whose hour of charity has now come.

"The prayer of Christ's congregation saves the world from perishing" (Martin Luther). Truly "heavy laden" Christians come to our Churches for Divine Service. They cling to the promise:

"yet doth He devise means that His banished be not expelled from Him" (2 Sam. 14, 14).

On leaving America Martin Niemöller addressed these parting words to the Christian brethren: "God bless you and all you do to sooth the suffering of a people who has paid already more than: "an eye for an eye" and "a tooth for a tooth" for having misplaced its trust in a new saviour. And may our one and only Saviour have mercy on us."



This Crucifix was left untouched in a ruined Church at Aachen, like a present day symbol for Luther's words written on the wall in times of great affliction: "VIVIT" (He liveth)! Our distress on Rhine and Ruhr, the focus of wretchedness and fear is now floodlighted by the Cross of our Lord. They all, the hungry and the freezing, the bombed and the refugees, the disabled may now look to the man in pains. He is the man with whom we may take refuge, to whom we may take everything that is too heavy for us. Deeply as we may have fallen, we shall not go to the abyss, but into the Saviours arms: "Behold, I will extend peace like a river. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

"WHO SHALL SEPERATE US
FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST?"

(Ep. t. th. Rom. 8,35)

Einer muß wachen über der Welt –
sonst alles im Dunkel zerschellt.

Einer muß steh'n über aller Not,
sonst verdirbt uns alle der Tod.

Einer muß tragen jedes Leid,
sonst ist keiner zum Tragen bereit.

Einer muß helfen mit starker Hand,
sonst fänd' ich ewig kein Vaterland.

Wollest begegnen mir, Herr Jesu Christ,
der Du in allem Herr und Heiland bist.

Heinrich Held

Translation:

One over the world must stand guard –
lest in darkness all fall apart.

One must stand above all distress,
lest we should all be lost in death.

One every sorrow must bear,
so none may refuse his share.

One must help us with his strong hand,
so that we find home to our father's land.

Oh Lord Jesus Christ to meet thee
Master and Saviour in all, concede me.

I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

Yea the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase.

Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps.

Psalm 85.

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